

Anderson: Career with a purpose

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NORTH SALT LAKE — Many people enjoy their jobs and some even leave for home at the end of the day knowing they made a difference in the world. Such is the case for North Salt Lake resident Mike Anderson. As the Weatherization director for the State of Utah, Anderson spends his days figuring out how to assist people through the state who are in need of home improvements that will increase the ability to control the heat and cold.



VOLUNTEERS display one of the many homes they helped work on as part of the Weatherization program.

“It’s a great job,” Anderson said. “I do something I really enjoy and it feels good to help people who really need it.”

Anderson oversees everything from grants for programs to actually getting down to the brass tacks of fixing homes. The department receives grants from the U.S. Department of Energy, HHS, Questar Gas, Rocky Mountain Power and the State of Utah.

“Without those outside resources we wouldn’t be able to help the people we do,” Anderson said.

Anderson’s team goes into homes and performs an energy audit and then, based on that information, performs main-tenance and complete reconstruction to better utilize power. A great deal of this is done on the Navajo Reservation where many people live in the worst possible conditions and on very little financial means.

“It’s amazing when you go into some of these homes and see people who are living on almost nothing,” Anderson said.

One of the biggest aspects of the program is due to the hundreds of volunteers who come in from all over the country and spend hours in the hot sun of the early summer to make these home improvements. Just weeks ago, more than 400 volunteers from as far away as New England broke into 61 work crews and put in more than 15,000 work hours.

“These people were working 16-hour days and it was hot,” Anderson said. “A lot of the work was fixing roofs and that meant people being outside on top of homes all day in the sun.”

Although he gives the credit to the volunteers, Anderson was one of those working in the summer heat to help those less fortunate.

“What’s real exciting about this program is that people are saving more than 30 percent on heating and cooling their homes,” Anderson said. “What then happens is that the money they would have used to pay for the energy bills can be shifted into other areas of their lives. So this program also has a positive impact on the economy by allowing people to spend in other areas of their lives.”

The program is also considered a permanent and long- term solution.

“Some programs work in that people are having to keep utilizing a resource that is given to them from the government,” Anderson said. “When we go into a home we make major changes and this becomes a solution that is going to last 30 years.”

Due to privacy policies, the names of volunteers remain confidential, but Anderson knows their experience is some-thing that makes an impact on the lives of the recipients, but also those who volunteer.

“This program is a win-win,” he said. “It’s a great way to make a living because I get to see people’s lives change. Not just the people we’re helping, but these volunteers have an experience they always say they’ll never forget.”

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